

Voluntary Report - public distribution

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Australia

Grain and Feed

Grain Update - December Lockup 2003

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Report Highlights:

Australia's 2003/04 wheat crop is projected at 23.5 million metric tons (MMT), unchanged from the previous forecast. Large wheat crops are expected in Western Australia and South Australia, with less favorable harvest prospects forecast in the eastern part of the country. Prospects for major irrigated summer crops, rice and cotton, remain generally unfavorable.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Canberra [AS1]
[AS]

Wheat Harvest Update

Australia's 2003/04 wheat crop is projected at 23.5 million metric tons (MMT), unchanged from the previous forecast (see GAIN Report #AS3044), but sharply higher than last season's drought-reduced crop. Large wheat crops are expected in Western Australia and South Australia, with less favorable harvest prospects forecast in the eastern part of the country. Recent widespread and heavy rains in eastern Australia have interfered with harvesting of winter grains and have caused some damage to late maturing crops.

Western Australia's winter crop harvest is progressing. Some scattered rainfall the last week has slowed harvesting. In general, indications still point to a large, and perhaps record, wheat crop in the state. Cooperative Bulk Handling (CBH), which handles the bulk of Western Australia's grain crop, reports 'grain' (which includes wheat, barley, oilseeds, and pulses) procurements into their facilities at 3.5 million metric tons (MMT) as of November 24, versus the 2.5 MMT procured as of November 19 and the 1.1 MMT as of November 10. Initial reports from receiving facilities indicate that wheat quality is excellent. CBH is still projecting their 'grain' procurements in Western Australia for the 2003/04 winter crop to total a record 14 MMT.

Reports out of South Australia still indicate a bumper wheat crop in the state.

The prospects for wheat production in eastern Australia are not nearly as positive as in the west. Widespread and heavy rains in a large part of New South Wales and Victoria over the November 21-23 period slowed harvest progress and caused some damage to mature and maturing wheat and other winter crops. The rainfall did benefit less mature grain crops. Rainfall in many areas during September and October was below normal.

Summer Crop Outlook

Prospects for major irrigated summer crops, rice and cotton, remain generally unfavorable. Irrigation water availability is below normal in southern NSW rice areas and even lower in irrigated cotton areas of northern NSW and parts of southern Queensland. The recent heavy rains in eastern Australia have led to some improvement in reservoir levels and soil moisture conditions. The more favorable soil moisture will benefit dryland cotton and sorghum plantings. However, more rain is required to significantly improve the outlook for the 2003/04 summer crops.

ABARE Crop Report

The Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) is scheduled to release their next Crop Report on December 2, 2003. The ABARE Report will contain updated winter and summer crop figures. The last ABARE Crop Report was released on September 9, 2003.

Recent Post Reporting on Grain

Partial Deregulation of Barley Exports in WA, AS3047, 11/19/03
Grain Update – November Lockup, AS3044, 11/03/03
ABARE September Crop Report, AS3029, 9/09/03
Grain Update – September Lockup, AS3027, 9/02/03
Grain Update – August Lockup, AS3024, 8/01/03
Grain and Feed Annual, AS3006, 3/10/03